



HAUGHLEY WI MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER, DECEMBER 2025

This Newsletter confirms arrangements for the December 3 meeting. It will also help to keep you updated with what is going on and to confirm our plans for the near future. Please share the contents with WI Friends without email access and let me know if a hard copy is wanted.

At our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on November 5 you elected your new committee and president. We said goodbye and gave our thanks to these committee members: Julia Brook, our president for two years, Sandra Lewis, Pat Burrows, Veronica Parti, Marian Adams and Sarah Swinge. The meeting concluded with savoury snacks and an optional glass of prosecco with and a lively social time helped along by chocolate bingo and a higher lower game conducted by two of our lovely members: Irene and Anne A. Under the leadership of new president Jane Thompson your new committee will continue provide a warm welcome to all women and will do all it can to ensure Haughley WI thrives in the future. Your committee have already met to define, allocate and accept a wide range of roles and responsibilities. Your new committee and their key roles are indicated in the table below.

HAUGHLEY WI COMMITTEE elected by you to serve from November 2025 to October 2026

Name	Key role and responsibilities
Jane Thompson	President: essential officer, who also manages our central database (MCS)
Christine Smith	Treasurer: essential officer, who manages and reports on our finances
Yvonne Hannan	Secretary: essential officer, who provides secretarial support as needed
Fiona Dearden	Vice president, committee appointment: to support Jane and also represent Haughley on the Gipping Valley WI group of seven local WIs.
Mandy Watson	Vice president, committee appointment: to support Jane and also provide a social media link and produce promotional materials etc. as needed
Chris Robinson	Food hygiene certificate holder, who will co-ordinate the Lunch Club and the general meeting refreshments provisions
Caroline Lambert	Qualified first aider and food hygiene certificate holder, who will help to keep us safe and will co-ordinate community café events

Three free centenary events provided for Members:

These events were funded by almost two-years of fund-raising activities and delivered during our centenary week by your Committee and volunteer helpers.

1. Sunday, October 26: Newly appointed vicar Andy Butress lead the church thanksgiving service. The prayers were uplifting, the readings pertinent and interesting and the wonderful singing was enhanced by the St. Mary's organist and choir. The service was followed by refreshments for the congregation: Haughley WI shortbread with a choice of prosecco or cordial. If you could not attend this event, but would like a copy of the order of service, please ask and we will see if we have any left.
2. Thursday, Oct 29: Committee members with the help of husbands and friends decorated and set up the Village hall ready for the event, stayed until everyone had left before securing the venue and then returned the next morning to take the decorations down and to return the hall to how we found it. It was hard work, but we think it was worth it! Members and specially invited guests enjoyed a 2-course meal provided and served by Burtons catering, a slice of centenary birthday cake made by Jean's Amazing Cakes for dessert and a glass of wine or soft drink from Mel's Happy Daze licensed bar. The atmosphere was lovely and people had fun at this event: a few adverse comments were made, but this was largely generated by the limitations of the Village Hall kitchen. After the meal non-paying guests invited by the members helped us to continue our celebrations with excellent live music by professional band - Caxton Swing: there was optional dancing, but most people elected to listen to the music and continue their conversations. The self-contained licensed bar, Mel's Happy Daze, was impressive: set up and run by a professional crew of bar staff it provided and served a wide choice of drinks to the happy party-goers.

3. Saturday, Nov 1: A lasting and unique memorial and plaque to commemorate Haughley WI's 100-year history was unveiled by Vicar Andy Butress at around 11.00am during the RBL Community café in the village hall garden. The galvanised steel sculpture, which depicts a cedar tree, was crafted to our design by a local Blacksmith Kevin from Designs on Metal. Kevin was on holiday, but David, owner of the forge was present. The cedar tree symbolises amongst other things, **strength, longevity, protection, and spiritual wisdom** and there are three ancient cedar trees on top of the site of the long-gone castle, the tops of which are visible from several vantage points in the village. The sculpture was collected and erected on its brick plinth by local builder Tony. The plinth was built by Tony and his friend Andy who, at their request, were paid by home-made cake! The vicar gave an amusing brief speech before unveiling the sculpture which requires minimal maintenance and should last a very long time. The ceremony was well attended by WI Members, families, friends and others and the unveiled sculpture was greeted by a round of applause and lots of positive comments.

September 3: Free to Members: a ticketed Open Evening with Lucy Lewis

Lucy was the first female bomb disposal officer in the British Army and the event was a huge success. Lucy is an excellent, hugely interesting and engaging speaker who was happy to take lots of questions from the riveted audience. The evening was preceded by buoyant ticket sales and on the night we were joined by many visitors including friends, neighbours and also representatives from two other local WIs. There was a well-supported "bottle-themed" raffle, with gifts donated by members and ticket sales run by Fiona. Refreshments were provided by the very busy and hard-working hostess team who did a marvellous job. This might well have been the most successful open evening we have ever hosted!

Managing Risk:

Haughley WI is insured via SEFWI and as such are required to consider and manage certain risks, especially:

- Walking Group: our risk assessment has been completed and filed: the Walking group lead, Anne M holds copies of all relevant documents.
- Food Hygiene: two committee members Chris and Caroline, are holders of certificated food hygiene qualifications. We hope to make this on-line course available to two more members next year.
- First Aid: two members Carline and Sarah are qualified first aiders. Next year we will be exploring how best to enable members to access optional CPR training in line with the current 2025 WI resolution.

The 3-month rolling Rota for our Hostesses who manage refreshments at monthly meetings:

This is updated every month and distributed with general meeting agendas and pinned on the notice board alongside the following 3-month rota. Members are asked to advise Yvonne of any swaps they make. If you are not able to fulfil allocated duties and have not been able to swap with anyone else, please contact Yvonne Hannan as soon as possible and offer up alternative dates when you expect to be free.

2026 Resolutions:

Jane and Sally are attending a SEFWI meeting in January 2026 and will report back to you in February

Older driver workshops

Road Safety Week is in November and Suffolk Fire and Rescue are offering workshops to the public. The aim is to reduce accidents on our roads this winter and to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on Suffolk's roads. This collaborative venture offers older drivers free workshops. To sign up for one of these free workshops, please call the Fire Business Support Team on 01473 260588, or visit website: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/road-safety-initiatives>

Best wishes

Yvonne

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